

# Views: Burn Your Bras, Save Your Breasts

**W**hat would you think if someone told you that wearing bras may be one reason why so many women are getting breast cancer? Well, according to a collection of remarkable articles printed in the May/June issue of *Spirit of Change* ("New England's Holistic Magazine"), research from several international sources does blame bra-wearing for contributing to this life-threatening disease.

Take a look at these startling statistics:

▼ 3 out of 4 women who wore their bras 24 hours per day developed breast cancer.

▼ 1 out of 7 women who wore bras more than 12 hours per day but not to bed developed breast cancer.

▼ 1 out of 152 women who wore their bras less than 12 hours per day got breast cancer.

▼ 1 out of 168 women who wore

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phatic pathway from the breast to the nodes. This causes fluid build-up, swelling, tenderness and cyst formation. A bra-constricted breast cannot adequately flush out toxins, resulting in toxin accumulation in the breast that increases the chance of breast cancer." (I bet your doctor never told you that!)

Other researchers have discovered that wearing bras increases breast temperature, and have linked this fact to evidence that breasts with cancer have a higher temperature than healthy breasts. Japanese researchers noted

who are born male can and do get breast cancer, though at far lower rates than those born female.

There is also good news for women who have been wearing bras and experiencing pain from fibrocystic breast disease: some women have decreased or eliminated cysts after going braless (see their personal stories at <http://www.all-natural.com/fibrocyts.html>).

While some may doubt whether bras are an actual cause of breast cancer; it's been noted by a number of researchers over the years that women in other parts of the world, especially in less "developed" countries, experience far lower rates of breast cancer than we do. And when these women become Westernized, they begin to get breast cancer as often as women in industrialized nations. Whether from diet, clothing styles, chemical use, or other factors, clearly there are health risks to living in our society.

In "Dressed to Kill: The Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras," Singer and Grismaijer explore what they call "culturo-genic disease," or disease contracted as a result of our cultural lifestyles. Check out their website at [www.selfstudycenter.org](http://www.selfstudycenter.org).

Another resource among the collection in *Spirit of Change* is that of Dr. Christiane Northrup, author of the best-selling book *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*. She also urges women to stop wearing bras, especially bras with underwires, because they cut off the circulation of blood and lymph fluid to the breasts and surrounding areas. There's more information on Dr. Northrup's website at [www.drnorthrup.com](http://www.drnorthrup.com).

Lastly, there's the issue of what to wear. Dr. Elizabeth Vaughan suggests everything from tape to camisoles to less restrictive bras. If women feel they need to wear a bra for a special occasion, she suggests wearing what feels comfortable, then when the event is over, get rid of the bra. In Dr. Vaughan's words: "Bras are not good for breasts."

There's much more information available here if you want to look further. You can read these articles online at [www.spiritofchange.org](http://www.spiritofchange.org) and go to links provided in the website. ▼

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bras rarely or never acquired breast cancer.

These numbers come from medical researcher Sydney Singer who did a study of 4,500 women across the U.S. after his wife, Soma Grismaijer, discovered a lump in her breast. According to the article, Grismaijer got rid of the lump by "quitting bra wearing, doing regular breast massage and exercise, drinking only purified water and taking some herbs and supplemental vitamins and minerals."

So why is bra-wearing a problem, other than the discomfort and pain that many women experience while wearing them? In another article, Mavis Davis explains that bras "subject breasts to pressure, closing off the lym-

phatic pathway from the breast to the nodes. This causes fluid build-up, swelling, tenderness and cyst formation. A bra-constricted breast cannot adequately flush out toxins, resulting in toxin accumulation in the breast that increases the chance of breast cancer." (I bet your doctor never told you that!)

The good news, of course, is that here is something we can do ourselves, or rather not do, that may help improve our health. Along with other healthy lifestyle choices, going braless is increasingly seen as a way to help prevent breast lumps and cancer. Finding ways to prevent cancer is helpful especially for lesbians, who experience a higher rate of breast cancer than heterosexual women. This may also be a choice for transwomen to consider. Those

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## It's better to know



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\* The Vermont AIDS Hotline is open weekdays, 8:30-4:30. (For information 24/7, call the National AIDS Hotline **800-342-2437.**)

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